SPRING 2009 | ISSUE 17

StreamLine

A publication of the Indianapolis Department of Public Works/Clean Stream Team

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

CROOKED CREEK AREA SEWER IMPROVEMENTS TO INCREASE SANITARY SEWER CAPACITY

The Crooked Creek Area Sewer Improvements project, one of the city's largest initiatives to improve public infrastructure, will create additional sewer capacity to accommodate population growth and allow for thousands of homes to connect to the sanitary sewer.

To resolve capacity problems, the Department of Public Works (DPW) will begin construction on the Belmont North Relief Interceptor in mid-2009. The new seven-mile interceptor will extend from 10th Street to 62nd Street near Crooked Creek and the White River on the northwest side of Indianapolis (see map on page 3).

"This long-anticipated project marks a major investment in the public infrastructure of our city," Mayor Ballard said. "With this new sewer interceptor, we will improve water quality and quality of life, while reducing our environmental impact through the use of green and sustainable technologies."

From 2009 to 2013, the city plans to bring sewers to more than 7,000 homes currently on septic systems, and approximately 2,000 of these homes are located in the Crooked Creek area.

On Tuesday, March 24, 2009, Mayor Greg Ballard announced the construction of a sanitary sewer interceptor, which will improve quality of life in nearby neighborhoods and water quality of Crooked Creek and the White River.

The Belmont North Relief Interceptor must be completed before these homes can connect to the sanitary sewer. Then, through the Septic Tank Elimination Program (STEP), residents will be able to abandon failing septic systems, which can leach raw

See "Crooked Creek Area Sewer Improvements," Page 3

BEAUTIFY YOUR LAWN AND GARDEN WHILE IMPROVING WATER QUALITY

April showers not only bring May flowers, they also bring homeowners more than one way to think green when it comes to keeping their lawn and garden looking beautiful and protecting Indianapolis' waterways.

Using Excess Stormwater

Homeowners can beautify their property and even reduce flooding by employing creative and sustainable green solutions.

Rain barrels are large containers connected to downspouts that collect and hold rainwater. The collected water can be used to water flowers, trees, lawns and even indoor plants. Typically made of plastic or wood, rain barrels can be purchased at some lawn and garden stores or built using materials available at hardware stores.

Rain gardens are another sustainable solution that can beautify

See "Lawn and Garden," Page 3

FROM THE DIRECTOR

David Sherman
Director
Indianapolis Department of Public Works

Every year on April 22, the world comes together to celebrate Earth Day and to raise awareness about the need to make our planet a cleaner, healthier place in which to live. As Earth Day reminds us, many communities, including Indianapolis, need to move forward with environmental and sustainability efforts. That's why Mayor Greg Ballard launched SustainIndy, a bold and innovative initiative to make Indianapolis one of the most sustainable cities in the Midwest. SustainIndy focuses on delivering long-term cost savings to the city, building the local economy, improving our quality of life and public health, and enhancing our environment.

DPW is working aggressively to make this vision a reality by incorporating sustainable practices into its 20-year plan to improve water quality in Indianapolis. Under Mayor Ballard's direction, DPW is revisiting planned projects to include sustainable, "green" design elements, which often are more cost effective than traditional methods. Plans include planting trees, rain gardens and bioswales, building green roofs and installing porous pavement.

Green infrastructure helps keep stormwater out of the city's overburdened combined sewer system, which in turn helps reduce raw sewage overflows in local waterways and reduces costs for ratepayers. In areas where sanitary and storm sewers are separated, trees and other vegetation slow and reduce the amount of stormwater entering the drainage system, also assisting with flood control in streets and yards. Additional green and sustainable concepts being integrated into the city's programs include reducing the amount of materials used, reducing disruption to existing infrastructure and reducing the use of petroleum-based products.

Rest assured that DPW is moving forward aggressively with the SustainIndy initiative, but we can't do it alone. Everyone has a role in improving our environment. In this issue, you'll find information about how you can help protect our waterways, such as planting rain gardens and marking storm drains. For more ideas, visit www.indycleanstreams.org and click on "How You Can Help."

Together, we can succeed in achieving a sustainable, livable Indianapolis for generations to come by making every day Earth Day.

Sincerely,

For more information about SustainIndy and to sign up to receive e-mail updates, visit www.SustainIndy.org.

COUNCIL APPROVES NEW SEWER RATES

On Monday, April 13, the City-County Council passed an ordinance to increase sanitary sewer rates by 10.75 percent annually from 2009 through 2013. The rate increase will fund the city's Clean Streams-Healthy Neighborhoods program and will go into effect May 1, 2009. The majority of the annual increases will help fund the federally-mandated $1.7 billion Long-Term Control Plan to reduce raw sewage overflows. For more information and a list of planned projects, visit www.indycleanstreams.org and click on "Projects."

PROTECT YOURSELF FROM OVERFLOWS!

When as little as a quarter inch of rain falls, sewers in older parts of Indianapolis can overflow, sending untreated rainwater and sewage into our streams and causing public health hazards. DPW encourages you to take the following protective actions:

- Avoid contact with urban streams, especially during and three days after rain or snowmelts.
- Always wash your hands after contacting water in urban streams, especially before eating, drinking or preparing food.
- Alter recreational activities to ones that do not include contact with urban waterways.
- Use a waterless hand sanitizer at outings that occur near urban streams.

For more information, visit www.indycleanstreams.org and click on "Raw Sewage Overflow Alerts."

VOLUNTEER TO HELP PROTECT OUR WATERWAYS

DPW is inviting volunteers to mark storm drains with colorful labels that say, "No Dumping – Drains to Stream," or a similar message informing people that the drain connects to a waterway. Dumping paint, motor oil, trash and other items down storm drains can have a negative affect on water quality in our city and the communities downstream from us.

If your organization would like to volunteer, you will be provided with the tools and information to complete the project. At least 10 volunteers are needed for each three- to four-hour event.

Contact stormdrain@indygov.org for more information.

ABOUT THE CLEAN STREAM TEAM

The Indianapolis Clean Stream Team is overseeing many projects to prevent raw sewage overflows into our waterways, eliminate failing septic systems, and improve flood control and drainage.

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INDIANAPOLIS CLEAN STREAM TEAM

CLEAN STREAMS
HEALTHY NEIGHBORHOODS

CROOKED CREEK AREA SEWER IMPROVEMENTS

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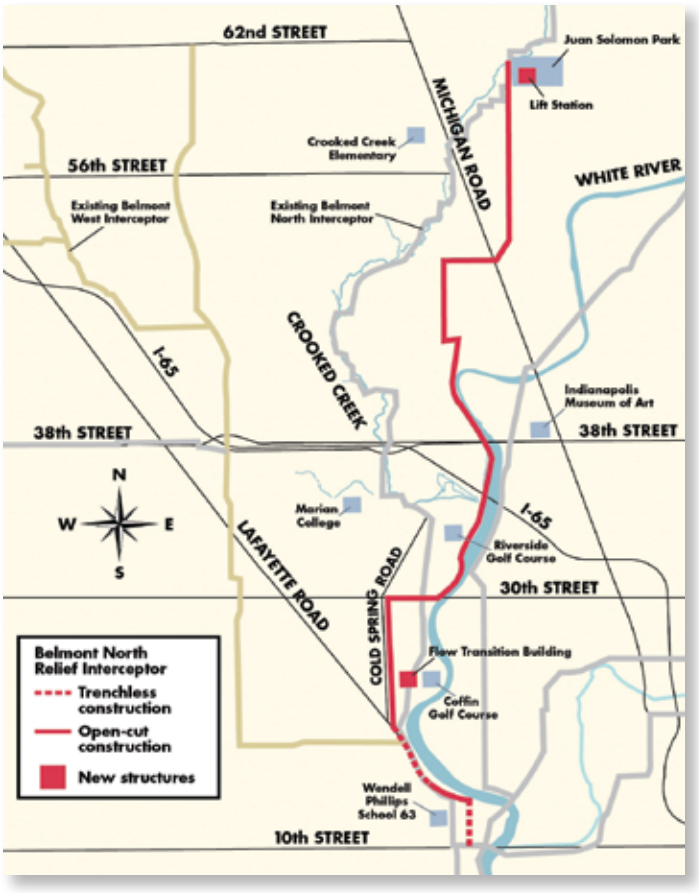
sewage into the groundwater that flows into neighborhood ditches, local streams and rivers. Connecting homes currently on septic systems to the sanitary sewer system not only will improve quality of life in those neighborhoods but also the water quality in Crooked Creek and the White River.

The Belmont North Interceptor currently carries sewage to the city's Belmont Advanced Wastewater Treatment Plant from Center, western Washington, Pike and northeastern Wayne townships. Neighborhoods served by this interceptor are expected to continue growing, and once fully developed, they will generate up to 50 million gallons of wastewater per day. The new Belmont North Relief Interceptor will accommodate the present and future needs of these neighborhoods.

Midway through the design phase, DPW reviewed the Crooked Creek Area Sewer Improvements project to identify efficiencies and cost savings through value engineering. Following an analysis of the design, the city identified an alternative that would cost less to construct and be less disruptive to the community. The chosen approach will allow the city to save approximately $50 million in capital costs and construct the relief interceptor more quickly. Estimated to cost approximately $100 million, the project will begin construction in mid-2009 and will be completed in late 2011.



LAWN AND GARDEN

(Continued from Page 1)

property and manage excess stormwater. These gardens are planted in low-lying areas with deep-rooted plants that thrive on and absorb water. Soil and flowers filter trash and other pollutants from stormwater before it enters the ground. These gardens can be planted with flowers, grasses, shrubs and trees.

For more information on these sustainable solutions and their benefits, visit www.sustainindy.org/green-infrastructure.cfm.

Protecting our waterways

When it comes to keeping your lawn and garden looking its best, homeowners can consider techniques that have minimal impact on the city's rivers and streams.

When chemicals are applied excessively or inappropriately on a lawn or garden, the chemicals may run off during rainstorms and wash directly into our waterways. Even small amounts of commonly used chemicals, such as insecticides, herbicides and fertilizers, can be dangerous to human health and degrade water quality. Insecticides and herbicides can damage or kill aquatic animals and plants. Fertilizers accelerate algae growth, which can affect oxygen levels in our waterways, harming beneficial aquatic wildlife.

To reduce the risk to waterways, residents should mow less frequently, allow grass to grow a little higher, leave grass clippings on the lawn, and/or water their lawn in the evenings. These tips also can help cultivate healthier lawns that require less maintenance.

IN VEGETABLE OR FLOWER GARDENS, CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

- Hand pick or wash pests off of plants
- Use row covers in gardens
- Try more natural, less toxic chemicals on plants first, such as insecticidal soaps and horticultural oils
- Introduce predatory insects and natural enemies of insect pests, such as ladybugs

IF CHEMICAL INSECTICIDES, HERBICIDES AND FERTILIZERS ARE USED, CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

- Read labels and use chemicals as directed
- Don't assume your yard needs fertilizer – test your soil
- Pull weeds by hand
- Do not apply a chemical when rain is imminent
- Choose a chemical insecticide, herbicide or fertilizer that is specific to the need

DO YOU HAVE A CORRECT CONNECT?

Are the downspouts from your roof connected to the city sewer? What about the sump pump keeping water out of your basement? Homes that are connected to the city sewer are contributing to raw sewage overflows into local streams and the White River each year.

Downspouts and sump pumps that are incorrectly connected to the city sewer send stormwater into the system, which takes up space needed to carry sewage to the wastewater treatment plant. During and after wet weather, excess stormwater entering the sewer can cause raw sewage overflows and basement backups in homes and businesses.

DPW is continuing its Correct Connect program to educate the public on how to identify and correct any incorrect or illegal sewer connections. Residents are encouraged to voluntarily disconnect downspouts and sump pumps from the city sewer, and most downspouts can be disconnected for $100 or less.

The supplies needed to disconnect downspouts and sump pumps can be found at local home improvement stores. For an instructional video, how-to materials, and assistance from city staff and partner organizations, visit www.indycleanstreams.org.

You may be incorrectly connected to the city sewer if…

- Downspouts disappear into the ground. Instead, the water from downspouts should flow into the yard.
- The sump pump is connected to another pipe in your home. Instead, water from a sump pump should flow into the yard, unless the washing machine is connected.

Printed on recycled paper with soy-based ink

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